

10 March 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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FROM : [redacted]
NFAC Focal Point Officer, Records Review Branch

SUBJECT: Agreement on Procedures for Handling Top Secret Records
During Declassification Review

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1. At the request of the Records Review Branch (RRB), Information Systems Analysis Staff (ISAS), DDA, a meeting was held on 2 February with Office of Security (OS) personnel concerned with Top Secret document control. RRB was represented by [redacted] and [redacted] (also ISAS Top Secret Control Officer (ATSCO)), and OS by [redacted] CIA Top Secret Control Officer (TSCO), and [redacted] a member of his staff. The purpose of the meeting was to review the RRB mission and to discuss and agree upon procedures that will provide secure handling of Top Secret records, and yet not impose upon either party procedures or a work load that would serve no useful purpose.

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2. The mission of RRB in implementing the requirements of Executive Order 11652 and related Directives that classified records 30 or more years old be reviewed for declassification was discussed by [redacted]. He noted that a forthcoming E.O. will probably change that time period to 20 years, and cited the EAG approved Action Plan for the 30-Year Declassification Review Program giving RRB responsibility for conducting the Records Declassification Program for the Agency. The Action Plan in effect authorizes RRB to review the records of all Agency components and at its discretion to downgrade or declassify them, including Top Secret documents under the control of individual ATSCOs. It was stressed that only in rare instances will RRB or ISAS originate Top Secret documents. All records to be reviewed will be forwarded to RRB by the Agency Archives and Records Center (AARC) and will be returned to them in the same boxes in which they were received. Also, RRB will not sanitize documents but will consider them in their entirety against guidelines prepared for each Agency Directorate. RRB will either retain the existing classification, downgrade, or declassify the documents, and in some instances may upgrade.

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3. Because of the unique nature of the RRB function and the large numbers of documents of all classifications that will be reviewed, it was agreed that rigid adherence to the regulations governing the handling of Top Secret materials would be costly in resources to all concerned without accomplishing any desirable purpose.

4. The following decisions and agreements were reached:

a. When RRB downgrades or declassifies a Top Secret document it will remove the green Control and Cover Sheet for Top Secret Document, before returning the document to AARC. The change in classification will be indicated on the cover sheet with the identical stamp RRB will use to indicate a change in classification on the document. The stamp identifies the reviewer by a number which is permanently assigned to the individual reviewer. The name of reviewers can be provided by RRB at any time.

b. The green cover sheets of downgraded Top Secret documents will be forwarded to the CIA TSCO in accordance with existing procedures. Following its normal practice the TSCO will enter the appropriate information from the cover sheets into TSCADS. If the TSCADS record indicates that other copies of the downgraded Top Secret document are held elsewhere within or outside the Agency, the TSCO will notify the appropriate ATSCO and request that he downgrade the document in his possession. To assure uniformity the TSCO will provide the ATSCOs with a duplicate of the declassification stamp used by RRB and the information to be entered, i.e., the action taken, date of action, and the reviewer's number used by RRB. This stamp will differ from that used by RRB only in that it will have an indicator to show that the downgrading is the result of action originally taken by RRB.

c. All records received by RRB from AARC for purposes of review for declassification will be returned to AARC in the box in which they were originally received. Some Top Secret records, however, will be returned either downgraded or declassified. When this occurs RRB will xerox the green cover sheets of downgraded Top Secret documents before sending them to the TSCO. The xeroxed copies will be forwarded to AARC at the time that the downgraded materials are returned. AARC will use the xerox copies of the cover sheets to notify the appropriate ATSCO and/ or RMO that a Top Secret document under their control has been downgraded.

d. If RRB upgrades a document to Top Secret it will assign a Top Secret control number to the document from the numbers assigned to ISAS but use the originator of the document as the source (if known), and will thereafter adhere to all reporting and control procedures governing the handling of Top Secret documents.

e. If RRB receives a Top Secret document without an assigned CIA Top Secret control number and without a green cover sheet, the ATSCO will prepare a cover sheet, assign a number, and adhere to all reporting and control procedures if the document is to remain classified Top Secret. If the document is to be downgraded or declassified, this procedure is to be omitted.

f. If RRB transmits an Agency Top Secret document to another Agency component for review and return, and not for retention, other action, or further distribution, RRB need not report the transmittal on the Form 3940. In all such cases RRB will maintain a tickler file on the document, to include the date forwarded, the return target date, and the name of the component and/or individual to whom the document is sent. The file card may be destroyed when the document is returned.

g. When RRB receives a Top Secret document from another agency with a request that information therein attributed to the Agency be reviewed for declassification, and not for retention or any further distribution, RRB need not assign a CIA Top Secret control number or prepare a cover sheet for the document. This will prevail even though RRB may refer the document to another Agency component for a decision and return to RRB. A tickler file as outlined in 4.f. above will be maintained on such referrals. RRB will retain a copy of the correspondence with the outside Agency but will keep such materials in a segregated file and will stamp the top page with the following:

This document is for internal RRB/ISAS use only. It has not been assigned a CIA Top Secret control number. If this document is used outside of RRB it must be assigned a control number and be properly recorded unless notification has been received that the outside agency has downgraded this document.

h. Top Secret documents received in RRB solely for purposes of review for declassification need not have the green cover sheet signed by each employee who sees the document while it retains its Top Secret classification.

i. Because RRB will not be the originator of Top Secret documents received from AARC for review purposes, and will not hold or use the Top Secret documents permanently, it need not report the movement of such documents on the Form 3940.

5. Both parties agreed that it would be mutually beneficial to continue close coordination on the matters discussed and to consult whenever changes appear desirable or new problems arise.

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CONCUR:

CIA Top Secret Control Officer

Date

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